


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

	Number:	21-455	Meeting:	October 18, 2021
	Agenda Item:	25	Roll Call:	21-1562
	Submitted by:	Chris Johansen, Neighborhood Services Department Director		

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of \$125,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for predevelopment costs and structural repairs, including foundation and masonry repairs, at Casa Vista, 3940 University Avenue.

SYNOPSIS:

Soil saturation has deteriorated the structural integrity of Casa Vista's foundation with significant sinking in the northwest corner of the building. This has led to damages elsewhere throughout the building including to the roof's west gable end. Soil samples were taken and confirmed high saturation levels. A structural engineer analyzed the property and provided recommendations to stabilize the building. It is recommended that the building be lifted, if possible, but primarily stabilized by installing push piers under the perimeter of the entire foundation. Casa Vista contains five (5) owner-occupied units and qualifies for CDBG funding because over half are low- or moderate-income households. City staff is seeking authority to execute a contract with the Casa Vista Homeowners' Association for up to \$125,000. Staff will also execute a concealed bid process in order to enter into a contract with a private contractor to complete the necessary work to stabilize the building.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$125,000

Funding Source: CDBG from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Casa Vista Apartment building is a 3-story brick structure containing five (5) owner-occupied units located at 3940 University Avenue. It was built in 1926 in conjunction with two (2) other identical buildings directly to the east. Residents of all three (3) buildings share the driveway, parking lot behind the buildings, and large front yard with mature oak trees sloping down from University Avenue.

- The five (5) unit owners in Casa Vista participate in a self-governing homeowners association (HOA) officially recognized by the State of Iowa as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The HOA collects \$275 from each unit owner every month. Over half of the units are low- or moderate-income households. This means household income, relative to household size, is 80 percent of the area median income (AMI) for the Des Moines/West Des Moines Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
- In 2020, unit owners noticed significant foundation sinking on the northwest side and contacted multiple foundation specialist entities last fall. Estimates for price and amount of work were wide ranging. They were encouraged to have a structural engineer analyze the site as well as have the soil sampled.
- Tometich Engineering, Inc conducted a visual inspection and provided a report on May 24, 2021. Among other observations, the report notes:
 - “The roof framing is okay, but has concerns on the west wall where it has separated from the structure.”
 - “The floors in the basement have failed in the northwest corner. It appears there is a void below the floor.”
 - “The foundation of the building is tile and brick masonry. Has concerns around the entire perimeter. The major concern is the northwest corner which has settled significantly.”
 - “The building has settled and is in a failure mode.”
- Construction Materials Testing conducted a geotechnical soil sampling and provided a report on June 28, 2021. Four (4) bores were drilled and soil moisture was approximately 10 to 18% above the optimum range of moisture content.
- Tometich provided preliminary engineering drawings with recommended stabilization specifications and procedures on August 31, 2021. Approximately 50 push piers will be installed four (4) feet apart under the northwest corner and six (6) feet apart under the remaining foundation perimeter. The procedure in an abbreviated form consists of:
 1. Remove slab
 2. Install push piers
 3. Lift with push piers until wall is in stable position (engineer of record to be present during lift)
 4. Tuckpoint, clean, and seal masonry, install new slab
- On September 29, 2021, the Casa Vista unit owners unanimously voted to pursue the aforementioned procedure along with repairing the roof’s west gable end and laundry drain. Further, they want any potential costs covered if damages to the building occur that are directly associated with the lifting and stabilization process. A formal master agreement will be signed by all unit owners on behalf of Casa Vista HOA with the City and contractor. Individual agreements between each unit owner and the City will be signed as well. A 5-year forgivable lien will be assessed evenly to each unit up to \$25,000.
- City staff will initiate a sealed competitive bid process based on Tometich’s recommended scope of work.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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